

taxable year that would have been deductible for the prior taxable year had the taxpayer used this method of accounting for such prior year. (See paragraph (e) of this section for rules describing how this amount should be taken into account.) A taxpayer must use the accrual method of accounting for any trade or business for which an election is made under section 466. Furthermore, the taxpayer must make an election in accordance with the rules in section 466(d) and § 1.466-3 for that trade or business. The method of accounting in section 466 is applicable only to the taxpayer's redemption of qualified discount coupons. Section 466 does not apply to trading stamps or premium coupons, which are subject to the method of accounting in § 1.451-4, or to discount coupons that are not qualified discount coupons.

(b) *Redemption costs*—(1) *Costs deductible under section 466.* The deduction allowed by section 466 applies only to the redemption cost of qualified discount coupons. The term “redemption cost” means an amount equal to:

(i) The lesser of:

(A) The amount of the discount stated on the coupon, or

(B) The cost incurred by the taxpayer for paying the discount; plus

(ii) The amount payable to the retailer (or other person redeeming the coupon from the person receiving the price discount) for services in redeeming the coupon.

The amount payable to the retailer or other person for services in redeeming the coupon is allowed only if the amount payable is stated on the coupon.

(2) *Costs not deductible under section 466.* The term “redemption cost” includes only the amounts stated in paragraph (b)(1) of this section. Amounts other than those mentioned in paragraph (b)(1) of this section cannot be deducted under the method of accounting described in section 466 even though such amounts are incurred in relation to the redemption of qualified discount coupons. Therefore, those amounts must be taken into account as if section 466 did not apply. Examples of such amounts are fees paid to the redemption center or clearinghouse and amounts payable to the retailer in ex-

cess of the amount stated on the coupon.

(c) *Qualified discount coupons*—(1) *General rule.* In order for a discount coupon (as defined in paragraph (c)(2)(i) of this section) to be considered a qualified discount coupon, all of the following requirements must be met:

(i) The coupon must have been issued by and must be redeemable by the taxpayer;

(ii) The coupon must allow a discount on the purchase price of merchandise or other tangible personal property;

(iii) The face amount of the coupon must not exceed five dollars;

(iv) The coupon, by its terms, may not be used with other coupons to bring about a price discount reimbursable by the issuer of more than five dollars with respect to any item; and

(v) There must exist a redemption chain (as defined in paragraph (c)(2)(ii) of this section) with respect to the coupon.

(2) *Definitions*—(i) *Discount coupon.* A discount coupon is a sales promotion device used to encourage the purchase of a specific product by allowing a purchaser of that product to receive a discount on its purchase price. The term “discount coupon” does not include trading stamps or premium coupons, which are subject to the method of accounting in § 1.451-4. A discount coupon may or may not be issued as part of a prior purchase. A discount coupon normally entitles its holders to receive nothing more than a reduction in the sales price of one of the issuer's products. The discount may be stated in terms of a cash amount, a percentage or fraction of the purchase price, a “two for the price of one” deal, or any other similar provision. A discount coupon need not be printed on paper in the form usually associated with coupons; it may be a token or other object so long as it functions as a coupon.

(ii) *Redemption chain.* A redemption chain exists when the issuer redeems the coupon from some person other than the customer who used the coupon to receive the price discount. Thus, in order to be treated as a qualified discount coupon, the coupon must not be issued by the person that initially redeems the coupon from the customer. For purposes of determining whether a

redemption chain exists, corporations that are members of the same controlled group of corporations (as defined in section 1563(a)) as the issuer of the coupon shall be treated as the issuer. Thus, if the issuer of the coupon and the retailer that initially redeems the coupon from the customer are members of the same controlled group of corporations, the coupon shall not be treated as a qualified discount coupon.

(d) *Deduction for coupons redeemed during the redemption period*—(1) *General rule.* Two special conditions must be met before the cost of redeeming qualified discount coupons during the redemption period can be deducted from the taxpayer's gross income for the taxable year preceding the redemption period. First, the qualified discount coupons must have been outstanding at the close of such taxable year. Second, the qualified discount coupons must have been received by the taxpayer before the close of the redemption period for that taxable year.

(2) *Redemption period.* The taxpayer can select any redemption period so long as the period does not extend longer than 6 months after the close of the taxpayer's taxable year. A change in the redemption period so selected shall be treated as a change in method of accounting.

(3) *Coupons received.* The deduction provided for in section 466(a)(1) is limited to the redemption costs associated with coupons that are actually received by the taxpayer within the redemption period. For purposes of this paragraph, if the issuer uses a redemption agent or clearinghouse to group, count, and verify coupons after they have been redeemed by a retailer, the coupons received by the redemption agent or clearinghouse will be considered to have been received by the issuer. Nothing in section 466, however, allows deductions to be made on the basis of estimated redemptions, whether such estimates are made by either the issuer or some other party.

(e) *Transitional adjustment*—(1) *In general.* An election to change from some other method of accounting for the redemption of discount coupons to the method of accounting described in section 466 is a change in method of ac-

counting that requires a transitional adjustment. Unless the taxpayer can qualify for a waiver of the suspense account requirement as provided for in section 373(c) of the Revenue Act of 1978 (92 Stat. 2865), the taxpayer should compute the transitional adjustment described in section 481(a)(2) according to the rules contained in this section. This adjustment should be taken into account according to the special rules in subsections (e) and (f) of section 466.

(2) *Net increase in taxable income.* In the case of a transitional adjustment that would result in a net increase in taxable income under section 481(a)(2) for the year of change, that increase should be taken into income over a ten-year period consisting of the year of change and the immediately succeeding nine taxable years. For example, assume that A, a calendar year taxpayer, makes an election to use the method of accounting described in section 466 for the year 1980 and for subsequent years. Assume further that the amount of the transitional adjustment computed under section 481(a)(2) would result in a net increase in taxable income of \$100 for 1980. Under these facts, A should increase taxable income for 1980 and each of the next nine taxable years by \$10.

(3) *Suspense account*—(i) *In general.* In the case of a transitional adjustment that would result in a net decrease in taxable income under section 481(a)(2) for the year of change, in lieu of applying section 481, the taxpayer must establish a separate suspense account for each trade or business for which the taxpayer has made an election to use section 466. The computation of the initial opening balance in the suspense account is described in paragraph (e)(3)(ii)(A) of this section. An initial adjustment to gross income for the year of election is described in paragraph (e)(3)(ii)(B) of this section. Annual adjustments to the suspense account are described in paragraph (e)(3)(iii)(A) of this section, and gross income adjustments are described in paragraph (e)(3)(iii)(B) of this section. Examples are provided in paragraph (e)(4) of this section. The effect of the suspense account is to defer some part of, or all of, the deduction of the transitional adjustment until the taxpayer